

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An infeed module for a printer, said printer including a module mounting site,
5 said infeed module comprising:
 - a mounting structure attachable at said mounting site of said printer;
 - a media stack receptacle, said stack receptacle having a feed side and a
replenish side, said stack receptacle being open at said replenish side; and
 - 10 a stack outlet adjacent said feed side of said stack receptacle, said stack
outlet presenting media externally of said module.
2. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 1 wherein said outlet
comprises a feed wheel.

15 3. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 2 wherein said feed wheel
includes a semi-annular surface portion and a second surface portion, said feed wheel
rotating to urge media from said stack receptacle and out said stack outlet.
4. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 3 wherein said semi-annular
20 surface portion has a circumferential dimension corresponding to a given length portion
of a media feed path portion beginning at said outlet side of said stack receptacle and
extending into said printer when said module is mounted at said mounting site of said
printer.

25 5. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 4 wherein said feed path
portion terminates at a feed device, said feed device propelling media further along an
overall feed path.
6. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 2 wherein said feed wheel
30 presents an annular surface and mounts at a distal end of a reciprocating arm, said arm
bringing said feed wheel selectively into and out of contact with media when in said stack
receptacle whereby coordinated contact with media and rotation of said feed wheel
propels media from said stack receptacle and out said stack outlet.

7. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 6 wherein said coordinated contact with media and rotation of said feed wheel propels media a given distance along a feed path portion.

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8. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 7 wherein said feed path portion terminates at a feed device, said feed device propelling media forward along an overall feed path.

10 9. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 1 wherein said replenish side is an upper side of said stack receptacle.

10. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 1 wherein said feed side of said stack receptacle is a bottom side of said stack receptacle.

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11. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 1 wherein said feed side of said stack receptacle is a lower side thereof and said replenish side of said stack receptacle is an upper side thereof.

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12. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 1 wherein said stack outlet of said module includes a high friction surface engaging through movement thereof media held in said stack receptacle, said movement of said high friction surface being driven mechanically by said printer.

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13. An infeed module for a printer according to claim 12 wherein said module mounting site of said printer includes in at least one of exposed or exposable first gear and wherein said module includes a complementary second gear positioned for engaging said first gear when said module is attached to said printer at said module mounting site.

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14. A method of printer operation, said printer including a media transport mechanism, said method comprising the steps:

removing a first portion of said media transport mechanism;

inserting a stack accessory in place thereof, said stack accessory feeding media from a stack receptacle having a feed side and a replenish side, said stack receptacle being open at its replenish side and feeding media taken from said stack receptacle at its feed side, said stack accessory complementing a second portion of said
5 media transport mechanism of said printer to selectively feed media from said stack accessory and through said printer.

15. A method of printer operation according to claim 14 further comprising the steps:

10 instructing said printer to apply print imaging to a plurality of items; and replenishing said stack accessory during uninterrupted execution of said print job.

15 16. A method of printer operation according to claim 14 further comprising the step of replenishing said stack accessory at said replenish side of said stack receptacle.

17. A method of printer operation according to claim 14 wherein said method of printer operation comprises coupling mechanically said stack accessory to said printer to drive operation of said stack accessory in propelling media therefrom.

20 18. A method of printer operation according to claim 14 wherein said method of printer operation includes application of print imaging to said media.

25 19. A method of printer operation according to claim 14 wherein said method of printer operation includes identifying said stack accessory to said printer, said identifying step distinguishing said stack accessory relative to a second accessory attachable to said printer.

20. A printing device comprising:

30 a printer in combination with a stack accessory attached thereto, said stack accessory passing a sequence of media from a stack receptacle thereof into a feed mechanism of said printer, said stack accessory having an open replenish side and a feed

side opposite said replenish side, said stack accessory collecting for print imaging said sequence of media from said feed side of said stack receptacle.

21. A printing device according to claim 20 wherein said printer in combination
5 with said stack accessory defines a media feed path.

22. A printing device according to claim 21 wherein said feed path includes a first portion and a second portion, said first portion being contributed at least in part by said stack accessory and said second portion being contributed at least in part by said printer.

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23. A printing device according to claim 20 wherein said open replenish side of said stack accessory receives additional media without interrupting a printing operation being executed by said printer in combination with said stack accessory.

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24. A printing device according to claim 20 wherein said stack accessory is removably mountable relative to said printer.

25. A printing device according to claim 20 wherein said stack accessory propels media therefrom a fixed distance relative thereto.

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